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## **Project for Public Spaces Announces Winners of Small Grants to Diversify Farmers Markets in Twelve Cities and Towns**

### **Grants totaling \$211,000 will expand impact of markets on communities**

NEW YORK, NY – Twelve farmers markets across the United States will grow and diversify their operations, while broadening the social, cultural, and economic impacts on the communities they serve. They are the recipients of 12 grants, totaling \$211,000, which were awarded by Project for Public Spaces (PPS), a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating and sustaining public places that build communities worldwide. PPS received 262 proposals from 46 states in this new, highly competitive and sought-after grant initiative.

This grant program is being undertaken in partnership with the Farmers' Market Coalition (FMC) component of the North American Farmers Direct Marketing Association (NAFDMA), with funding provided by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The grants are part of a three-year, \$3 million grant-making program, which began in 2005 and is also funded by The Ford Foundation.

The number of farmers markets across the United States has doubled in the last decade to an estimated 3,700, selling products ranging from local produce to meat and dairy to crafts. Almost all farmers markets have started at the community level, initiated by grassroots, agricultural or faith-based organizations, downtown associations, chambers of commerce, or community food activists. Given this history, most markets have few resources from which to grow, yet they have enormous untapped potential – for farmers, customers, and communities.

“Over the past three years, Project for Public Spaces has deepened its understanding of the complex relationships between a market and the community it serves,” said Steve Davies, Senior Vice President and Director of the Public Markets Program at Project for Public Spaces. “These grants provide much-needed financial support for farmers markets to reach their potential as central places in communities, as well as substantially contribute to their communities’ overall well-being. We hope these markets will inspire national adoption of innovative farmers market and community development programs.”

These one year grants provide farmers markets with the *resources to innovate* to address broader community impacts, not only with funding but with peer networking opportunities and communications expertise to augment outreach efforts, while building their *capacity to succeed* as effectively run, financially sustainable organizations.

Market grantees receiving financial and technical support range from a small neighborhood youth market in Denver, CO to an historic market in Lynchburg, VA, to a new, Latino mercado in Portland, OR. This support provides the means for markets to forge new partnerships with health institutions, schools, transit agencies, urban agriculture groups, and even a children’s museum. Some markets intend to provide opportunities for youth, immigrants, and disadvantaged individuals to become market vendors. All the market grantees plan to expand their customer base to better serve low

income shoppers and ethnically diversifying populations, and most plan to acquire the technology to accept food stamps.

“We were amazed by the huge response to the grant initiative. The response alone shows the need for more resources for farmers markets, and how communities across the country want to expand the impact of their markets and make them more economically viable. Even with their typically small budgets, we are seeing that small grants can have a powerful, sustainable impact.” said Charlie Touchette, Executive Director of NAFDMA.

While spurring innovation at the local level, this initiative will also help develop more supportive state and federal policies for markets and work to create ongoing sources of funding for farmers markets. PPS will announce another \$800,000 in grant awards in March 2006 to support networks of markets in metropolitan areas and state and regional farmers markets associations.

The grantees were chosen for their innovation, demonstrated capacity to effectively manage a challenging project, their ability to address the compelling needs of their communities, and their ability to sustain the program in the future. They are as follows:

*Lynchburg, VA*

**Strengthening Lynchburg Community Market with Employment Opportunities**

Partner with Lynchburg Grows, an organization providing workforce training for disadvantaged individuals, to grow produce in its 6.5 acre urban greenhouse and on five community garden sites and to create jobs selling produce on a year-round basis at the historic market hall, founded in 1783.

*Fayetteville, AR*

**Diversifying the Rural Mountain Producers Exchange, Fayetteville Farmers Market**

Accommodate the shifting demographics illustrated by the 818% increase from 1990 to 2000 among Fayetteville residents identifying as Latino by enhancing opportunities for both Latino growers and community members to sell produce and shop at the 32 year old market.

*Denver, CO*

**Growing for Health - Schools and Students at Fairview Youth Farmers' Market**

Expand the community-run market and garden in a low-income, ethnically diverse neighborhood by working with Fairview Elementary School, involving more students as “Nutrition Ambassadors,” and recruiting more farmers.

*Holyoke, MA*

**Promoting the Holyoke Farmers Market through Health and Senior Centers**

Attract more Latino farmers to serve one of the largest Puerto Rican communities in the continental U.S.; provide discount coupons and van shuttles for seniors served by the Holyoke Council on Aging; and partner with the Holyoke Health Center to create incentives for their clients to increase consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables from the market.

*Lynn, MA*

**Expanding the Lynn Farmers Market with a Connection to Transportation**

Enhance the market as a key community gathering place; improve EBT/food stamp capabilities; work with local businesses, farmers, and youth growers to increase the availability of culturally appropriate produce; and position the market to relocate to a transportation hub in 2007.

*Lansing, MI*

**Youth & Neighborhood Outreach to Expand the Allen Street Market**

Partner with a new youth run greenhouse in a downtown park to expand the market's product mix and growing season. Attract more customers by improving EBT/food stamp capability and promoting the market throughout the neighborhood.

*Minneapolis, MN*

**2006 Outreach Collaborative at Midtown Public Market and Midtown Global Market**

Expand the existing market with more immigrant, minority, and youth vendors, working with such programs as the Minnesota Food Association's "New Immigrant Agriculture Project." Open an additional market at Midtown Global Market, a new year-round market, and establish an EBT pilot program at both markets.

*Cincinnati, OH*

**Tri-State EBT Project at Findlay Market Farmers Market**

Implement a system to allow shoppers from Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky which neighbor the 153 year-old, six-day-a-week market to use EBT/food stamps to purchase fresh, healthy food and to improve direct marketing opportunities for farmers.

*Portland, OR*

**Minority Enterprise Development at Mercado Mi Pueblo**

Develop a new mercado in an ethnically-diverse neighborhood, provide job training and ongoing support to residents to become market vendors, and recruit minority farmers from Eastern Oregon and Washington.

*Mount Vernon, Skagit County, WA*

**Skagit Cooks! Improving the Availability of Fresh Food to Youth, Customers Using EBT, and Health Practitioners at the Mount Vernon Farmers Market**

Increase availability of fresh food for school children and their families, implement EBT, open an additional market at a local hospital, sponsor kids' activities with the children's museum, and build visibility of the market as an integral part of the downtown's redevelopment plan.

*Prosser, WA*

**Nutrition Education Programs at the Prosser Farmers Market**

Attract a more diverse customer base in a small town of 5,000 residents; enhance the market as an outlet for the area's increasing number of small, minority, and new farmers; and expand outreach to schools and local food cooperatives.

Madison, WI

### **Working with the Community to Strengthen the South Madison Community Farmers Market**

Add a third market day at The Villager, a strip mall being redeveloped as a community center with a library, health center, and technical college; expand a youth gardening program to grow produce and operate a stall at the market; and develop market-centered Community Supported Agriculture programs.

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*Project for Public Spaces (PPS) is a non-profit organization founded in 1975 dedicated to creating and sustaining places that build community. We provide technical assistance, education, and research through programs in parks, plazas and central squares; buildings and civic architecture; transportation; and public markets. PPS has worked with communities in 48 states and in 20 countries around the world. Please visit [www.pps.org](http://www.pps.org) for more information.*

*The [North American Farmers Direct Marketing Association](#) (NAFDMA) was established in 1986 to provide education and forward innovations in farm direct marketing for the purpose of promoting economic sustainability for family farmers. By 1997, NAFDMA recognized that the farmers market community had unique challenges compared with “on-farm” direct marketing venues and would benefit from a more focused agenda of its own issues. In 1998, in order to satisfy that need, NAFDMA began an aggressive strategy to establish a component of the association to focus entirely on issues related to farmers’ markets. The Farmers’ Market Coalition (FMC) was created in 2002 and elected its first governing council in February 2005.*

*The [W.K. Kellogg Foundation](#) was established in 1930 “to help people help themselves through the practical application of knowledge and resources to improve their quality of life and that of future generations.” Its programming activities center around the common vision of a world in which each person has a sense of worth; accepts responsibility for self, family, community, and societal well-being; and has the capacity to be productive, and to help create nurturing families, responsive institutions, and healthy communities.*

*To achieve the greatest impact, the Foundation targets its grants toward specific areas. These include: health; food systems and rural development; youth and education; and philanthropy and volunteerism. Within these areas, attention is given to exploring learning opportunities in leadership; information and communication technology; capitalizing on diversity; and social and economic community development. Grants are concentrated in the United States, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the southern African countries of Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe.*